



Army Benefits Center - Civilian

SWCPOC at Fort Riley, Kansas

ABC-C News

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Special Edition

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We hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative.

Our purpose is to provide up-to-date information helpful to you when using Army's automated system to manage your benefits and entitlements, and when planning your retirement.

Your feedback is appreciated on how we can better serve you.

Cynthia Porter

Chief, Army Benefits Center-Civilian



Thrift Savings Open Season

15 Oct 02 – 31 Dec 02

The current TSP open season began October 15 and continues through December 31. During this open season, if you have retirement coverage under FERS or CSRS, you can elect to make contributions to TSP, change the amount of money you are contributing or terminate your contributions to TSP.

CSRS employees can elect to contribute up to 8% of their pay and FERS employees up to 13%. If you decide to contribute an even dollar amount, you need to ensure the amount will not exceed the percentage allowed by your retirement plan and the overall limit of TSP contributions of \$12,000 for the year 2003.

If you decide to elect to contribute or change the amount of money during this open season, review the chart below to see when your transaction will be effective and which week you will see the change in your check. Terminations will be effective at the end of the pay period in which the termination is processed.



| Created | Effective | Pay Week |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 15 Oct – 30 Nov | 1 Dec | 23-27 Dec |
| 1-14 Dec | 15 Dec | 6-10 Jan |
| 15-28 Dec | 29 Dec | 20-24 Jan |
| 29-31 Dec | 12 Jan | 3-7 Feb |

For more TSP information, go to:
<https://www.abc.army.mil> and www.tsp.gov.



Health Benefits Open Season

11 Nov 02 – 9 Dec 02



The 2002 Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season will run from 11 November through 9 December 2002. During this period, you can elect a new health benefits provider. Changes made during this open season will be effective on 12 January 2003 and the new premiums will be reflected in your check the week of 3-7 February.

Since there are many changes coming for calendar year 2003, please take a few minutes and review the information at www.opm.gov/insure to determine if your health plan is changing for next year. If your current plan is changing coverage or terminating participation in the plan, this open season is your only opportunity to elect health benefits coverage for calendar year 2003.

For more FEHB information, visit the following sites:

<https://www.abc.army.mil> and www.opm.gov/insure



Are you planning retirement in the near future?

To allow sufficient time to receive your records and process your retirement, you need to submit your retirement package to the ABC-C at least 90 days before the date you plan on retiring.

Technical Assistance Availability



Are you having trouble establishing a POE password or a PIN? The SWCPOC HelpDesk is available to assist employees having difficulty with either the ABC-C website or the IVRS telephone system Monday through Friday during the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. CST. The HelpDesk staff can provide assistance to employees receiving errors when creating the POE or PIN.

Please remember the HelpDesk personnel are not benefits counselors and cannot answer benefits questions, they provide assistance for reaching the ABC-C either through the website or telephone system. For assistance call 1-785-239-2000 or DSN 856-2000.



POE vs PIN



Many employees are confused by the Point-of-Entry (POE) password and Personal Identification Number (PIN) that are used by the ABC-C systems. Both the POE and PIN are created by you and are immediately available for use to access the ABC-C systems.



The POE is a password to take you from the public area of the ABC-C website to the secure area (EBIS) where you can view personal information and create transactions. If you forget your POE password or it expires, you can immediately create a new one and gain access to EBIS.

The PIN is used in conjunction with your SSN to create an electronic signature block. You use it in the secure area of the ABC-C website (EBIS) and when you use the telephone system (IVRS). Your PIN for first time use is month and year of birth (Ex, Dec 1958 – 1258).

To successfully create your POE and PIN, you will need a copy of your latest SF50 or LES. Complete the information on the screen or dial it as requested on the telephone and you should find you are successful and can then access your personal information.



FEHB Premium Conversion



Did you ever wonder what this is? It means that the part of your salary that is deducted for health insurance premiums is non-taxable income. You save on Federal income tax and FICA taxes and, in most cases, State and Local

taxes as well. If you are participating in premium conversion, it is annotated on your leave and earnings statement in the remarks section "Pretax FEHB Exclusion".

For more information, review the information on our website or go the OPM website www.opm.gov. If you have specific questions, please call our counselors between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. CST.



Counselors are available to answer your questions between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. CST.

You can call from anywhere on any telephone and reach a counselor.



FEHB Information for Reservists

Due to recent legislative changes regarding benefits as a civilian employee and active duty military member, we are pleased to share some exciting news!



Current Army civilian employees who will be on leave without pay (LWOP) in support of a contingency operation may now be eligible to have the government pay the employee share of the FEHB premium.

If you meet the eligibility requirements, you can stop making your FEHB premiums while you are on LWOP.

If you have previously made payments, procedures for reimbursing retroactive contributions will be issued separately.

For more information, please visit the ABC-C website.



ABC-C is a Division of SWCPOC, at Fort Riley KS

Send comments or suggestions to:

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